

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 SSM-05 DHA-02 ORM-02 SAM-01

SAB-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSC-01 AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-02

TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 COME-00 /109 W

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R 091520Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9037

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 5236

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SY

SUBJECT: SWEARING IN OF NEW SYRIAN CABINET

REF: DAMASCUS 5219

1. AUG. 9 MEDIA REPORTED THAT NEW CABINET OF PRIME MINISTER ABD AL-RAHMAN KHULAYFAWI TOOK ITS OATH OF OFFICE PREVIOUS DAY AND HELD FIRST MEETING, CHAIRED BY PRES. ASAD. ASAD DELIVERED ORATION SUITABLE FOR OCCASION, URGING MINISTERS TO WORK HARD AND BE RESPONSIVE TO CITIZEN GRIEVANCES. HE THEN REVIEWED GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN ME AND STRESSED THAT SYRIAN POSTURE TOWARD BASIC ISSUES WILL NOT CHANGE. HE PLEDGED TO CONTINUE BUINDING SYRIA'S INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS.

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2. TISHRIIN CITED INTERNATIONAL PRESS COMMENTS ON NEW SARG CABINET. IT NOTED FAVORABLY REPORTS THAT CABINET BROAD-BASED, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF BAATH AND OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES AND INDEPENDENTS; THAT CABINET EXPECTED TO ENACT CHANGES IN ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE FIELDS; AND THAT KHULAYFAWI WILL PROBABLY UNDERTAKE SERIOUS EFFORT TO REIN IN CORRUPTION.

3. TISHRIIN COLUMNIST EMPHASIZED THAT CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT DID NOT REFLECT ANY INTENTION TO DOWNGRADE PUBLIC SECTOR NOR TO SHIRK NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN STRUGGLE AGAINST ZIONISM AND IMPERIALISM. HE CALLED FOR GREATER ECONOMIC PROGRESS TO GAIN FOR SARG SUM EQUAL OR MORE THAN "WHAT WE MAY BE OBLIGATED TO BORROW".

4. COMMENT: REMARKS BY PRES. INDICATE ASAD HAS NOT GIVEN CABINET MANDATE TO CHANGE ANY OF HIS BASIC POLICIES. RATHER, NEW MINISTERS ARE EXPECTED TO SHOW MORE HONESTY AND VIGOR IN TACKLING PRESSING ECONOMIC CONCERNS OF SYRIAN PUBLIC. COMMENTS ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR INTENDED TO REASSURE THOSE PERHAPS FEARFUL THAT CABINET MIGHT ACCELERATE TREND TO LIBERALIZE SYRIA'S SOCIALIST STRUCTURE IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH ECONOMIC ILLS. MURPHY

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